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the kind called *kwadrikurs*. A boy goes within the imitation hut with a brass vessel (*achok*), and coming out gives this to the woman, who bows down (*nersatiti*) with her child at the threshold of the imitation hut. She then takes butter and buttermilk which have been placed by the *palikartmokh* on fire-brands (see p. 318). After taking the mixture the woman goes to the dwelling-hut and resumes her ordinary duties.

It is the custom for everyone present on this occasion to give the child a four-anna piece (*panm*), and near relatives may often give more. A small loincloth (*tadrp*) provided with a pocket called *terigs* is put round the child, and into this pocket the money is put, this action receiving the name of *terigs katpimi*, or "we tie the *terigs*." I did not hear of this pocket in any other ceremonies, and, so far as I know, it is only made in the *tadrp* used on this occasion, or if a constant feature of the *tadrp*, it has no other ceremonial use. So far as I am aware, the representation of a house is only used by the Teivaliol, while the imitation dairy made on going to the seclusion-hut after hand-burning and childbirth is only made by the Tartharol.

It is tempting to suppose that the water poured in these ceremonies from an imitation dairy vessel over the back of a calf is regarded as milk, and if this is so, the drinking of milk, real or fictitious, would be the essential feature of all these ceremonies. Further, the conjecture is natural that the drinking is designed to promote the formation and flow of milk in the woman. It is perhaps in favour of this that in the ceremony after childbirth, when this motive would be especially important, the water is poured over the hind-quarters of the calf and not over the middle of its back, as in the earlier ceremony. But if the promotion of lactation is the leading motive of the ceremonies, it is difficult to see why a buffalo in full milk should not have been chosen instead of a two-year-old calf.

It is possible that there is some reason why an adult buffalo should not be used on such an occasion, and that a calf is used as a substitute, and, on the whole, the view that some features of the ceremonies had their origin in the motive

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suggested is the most probable one; but this can only be conjecture, for it is, I think, quite clear that the ceremonies have now become purely ritual, and are performed with no other reason than that they are prescribed by custom.

The use of an artificial dairy among the Tartharol, however, has almost certainly a deeper meaning. It is a striking fact that a pregnant woman and one soon after childbirth should have relations with a dairy, even if only artificial, when in ordinary life they have nothing to do with it or its ceremonial. Still more remarkable is the fact that a Tarthar woman after childbirth puts round her waist threads from the garment worn only by dairymen, a garment which has a distinctly sacred character. If this were done only in the case of a male child, it might be supposed that the idea is one of initiation into the life connected with the dairy, but the artificial dairy after the hand-burning ceremony is made when the sex of the child is unknown, and, so far as my information goes, the use of the dairy and the threads from the *tuni* occurs after the birth of either a boy or girl. It is possible that the ceremonial observances are relics of a time when women had more to do with the dairy and its ritual than they have at present; or it may be that contact with the sacred objects, real or fictitious, is held to neutralise in some way the dangerous nature of pregnant and parturient women.

There is some reason to believe that the material of which the *tuni* is made is the same as that of the ancient clothing of the Todas, the cloth called *ăn*. As we shall see later, the *ăn* is still used in the funeral ceremonies, and it is possible that the threads of *tuni* are used in these ceremonies as relics of the ancient clothing of the Todas, and that they are obtained from the *madtuni* because it is the most convenient way of obtaining the ancient material. If this had been the motive, however, I think the word *ăn* would almost certainly have been used, as it still is in the funeral ceremonies. Nevertheless, this remains as a possible alternative explanation of the use of a sacred dairy garment by a woman after childbirth.

A further mysterious feature of these ceremonies is that

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852 buttermilk from the dairyman, and there the mother uncovers
854 the child's face.

I was not told that the covering of the face is designed to protect the child from the influence of the evil eye, but this is the probable motive. The object of the ceremony is probably to minimise the danger incurred when the covering is removed by putting the child, if a boy, into relation with the three sacred objects, the dairy, the herd of buffaloes, and the sun. If a girl, the child is taken to the spot nearest to the dairy where women are allowed to go.

NAMING THE CHILD

553 The child is named after its face has been uncovered. The
852 ceremony is called *per vasthpini*, "name we give," and it may take place immediately after the ceremony of uncovering the face, or a few days later. In the former case, the child, if a boy, is taken by his father from the place where the buffaloes are standing to the front of the house, and there the father shaves the middle part of the head of the child. Then the boy's maternal uncle (*mun*) gives the name, and promises a calf, saying, *pöl ud todein*, "calf one I have given," followed by the name of the child,[1] and raises each foot to the head of the boy and touches his forehead, the salutation on this occasion being called *kalkastiti*. Three grains of barley are put into the mouth of the boy and three into his back-hair, and then the grains are thrown away.

There was some doubt as to the relative by whom a girl is named. It seemed clear that the name is given by a woman, and I was told definitely by some that it is given by the father's sister (*mumi*) of the child. The wife of the *mun* would also be the *mumi* of the child, and it is possible that this relative may give the name. No calf is given to a girl, this being only done when boys are named.

After the naming, the parents of the child may give a feast
[574] if they are rich, but this seems to be now exceptional. After
953 receiving its name, the child is given food for the first time, having been suckled up to this day, but my notes do not

[1] For the nature of the name see Chapter XXVI.

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make it clear whether the child is weaned at this time or continues to be suckled.

When the child is shaved, a bone of a bird called *mâtpül* and a stone procured from the bazaar called *kansutimani* are put round its wrist. The bone is cut into small pieces and strung alternately with pieces of the stone so as to form a kind of bangle. It was said that the child would become ill if this charm were not used, and the name of the stone (*kan* = eye) shows that it is intended to avert the evil eye.

The Tersamptpimi Ceremony

This is a ceremony closely connected with the naming of a child, but only performed after the second funeral (*marvainolkedr*) of a Tarthar man. It seemed probable that at one time the name was actually given during the *tersamptpimi* ceremony, but as the *marvainolkedr* of Tartharol now occur only at considerable intervals, it has become the custom to bestow the name in connexion with the ceremony of uncovering the face.

The ceremony of *tersamptpimi* is performed on the day after the funeral, this day being called *karvnol*, and as in the ceremony of naming, the chief part is taken by the child's maternal uncle. The uncle comes to the village where the child is living, bringing a stake of wood of the wild rose[1] called *kadakmân*. He splits the piece of wood into two pieces, each of which is called *ketkark*, and putting the hair of the child between the two *ketkark*, he cuts off a lock. If the child is of the Tarthar division, the hair is cut with a piece of sharpened iron called *kanab*,[2] while the hair of a Teivali child is cut with an ordinary knife (*turi*), but both *kanab* and *turi* on this occasion receive the special name of *tersampki*. After cutting the lock of hair, the uncle puts it on one side together with the *ketkark* and the *tersampki*, and if the boy has not already been named, the name is now given by the uncle and a calf promised.

Before this ceremony, the bangle of bone and stone, put

[1] Rosa Leschenaultiana.

[2] Lit. 'eye arrow.'

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264 Mutnarsh and his family in an excellent bowl of rice which had been
123 prepared specially for me. We all ate with our fingers, with the right hand, as is the Indian custom.

In the afternoon, the gardeners would return from their work before
512 5 o'clock, while the women would sit about sewing and embroidering *putkulis*. The children would play, and those men who stayed behind, like Motsod for instance, would either sleep or receive visitors from other *munds*. After 5 p.m. the buffaloes were brought back; they would
[234] be milked again by the *tarvalikartmokh* and then put away in the pen, while Narjilkh would see to it that the calves were in for the night. Kuddhue would churn the milk in the dairy-temple, and the buttermilk and the butter would be brought out by his attendants to be handed over to the women at the precise spot (marked with an upright stone) beyond
[264] which they are not allowed. The evening meal would be eaten and everybody would go to bed early, practically immediately after sunset (7 p.m.).

[123] When I worked only half a day with these people, I would usually stay with them from 2 p.m. to 7 p.m. talking and watching what was going on. This seemed to be the best time in which to get information from the Todas.

3. THE POLYANDROUS UNIT

844 Approximately two weeks after I had arrived in the Nilgiris, on the 18th
845 May, 1949, Erzigwuf gave birth to twins for the second time. It was about 8 p.m. when she felt unmistakable pains. She immediately got on to the *kitten* of the room she lived in and assuming a kneeling position,
[606] called for Silidz, her mother-in-law, who came at once to assist her. A first child, a boy, was born without difficulty, and, the pains continuing, half an hour later a little girl also made her appearance, who was taken out, like the first baby, from behind by Silidz. The latter cut the cords
[278] with a pair of scissors, tied the remaining stumps tightly with hair and smeared the wounds with an astringent root from the marshes which the Todas call *poli*; she next went away from the *arsh* and buried the cords and the afterbirth in a hole which she made in the ground. The newborn babies were washed in hot water and with soap (bought in the bazaar), and laid to rest with their mother, who had by now moved back to the *ertilkh* where she was resting on her back. She did not start to
853 feed them before the next day.
845 When I saw her then, in the evening, she was sitting on the *kitten*, naked to the waist, suckling one of the babies from her left breast. She

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complained that she was not feeling too well, and that she really did not have enough milk for twins a second time. The babies appeared quite well, the one who was presented to me as the girl seeming better and stronger than the other. Mutnarsh arrived soon after; he told me too that twins again were an impossible burden for his wife and himself, that Erzigwuf could not possibly feed them both, and ended up by asking me for some brandy for the mother, to which request I did not accede, as it is the Toda practice to distribute brandy to others on the occasion of a birth, and I suspected that that was the real motive of the demand. Besides, prohibition exists in the State of Madras, and it is impossible to obtain brandy except for medical purposes, this even being tied up with considerable formalities. The complaints about the difficulty of feeding twins made me suspect at once that, in accordance with Toda practice, it was not proposed to let more than one of them live, and that preferably the girl would be left to die. However, during the next days, Erzigwuf looked much better (she went out for a walk round the house on the 20th, in the evening) and so did the children, and I began to lose my suspicions.

I enquired who was the father, and I was assured that it was Mutnarsh. Kuddhue, since the first lot of twins were born, was not allowed near Erzigwuf, she told me, as she had the dreadful impression that they might be the result of his infirmities. Munbokwutn had had only fleeting intercourse with her, and that after her return from Palani with Mutnarsh, and after she knew herself to be pregnant. The other children were not jealous of the new babies, I was told, and from personal observation I gathered that this was correct. Both Sodup and Sodam seemed to have as much a share of their mother as before, both having been weaned from her some months earlier.

On the 24th May, the birth ceremony described by Rivers (*The Todas*, p. 324) under the name of *polk potha nit utpimi* took place. Readers are referred to that author for details of the ritual, but it can roughly be said that it is one in which the recently delivered mother is escorted to a *puzharsh* or seclusion-hut where she will remain in impurity until a few days before the next full moon, (in Erzigwuf's case, she remained there for only three days, as the new moon was just about due).

The ceremony took place in accordance with the prescribed rules, and Erzigwuf was accompanied by Mutnarsh and Silidz. What was unusual, however, was that when the part in which water is drunk out of bamboo tubes was reached, Sodup who was standing with the rest of

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us spectators (Munbokwutn, the youngest father, was also there), started crying. He insisted that he be given some water to drink, which was done, although not strictly in accordance with custom. Sodam was also given a little, as she too started to cry when she saw her little brother getting what he wanted. But Sodup did not stop crying. He now complained that they were taking his mother away, and that he would be left without her. Sodam added her wails to his, and finally Erzigwuf took them both along with her into the *puzharsh*, which was quite unorthodox. So there did appear, all the same, to be a certain amount of jealousy in the hearts of the two elder twins.

In the middle of the ceremony, Kuddhue turned up. He was, at the time, functioning as the *wursol* of the Karsh *mad*, and should strictly have remained on the job. He had even come to Melgarsh by the quickest way, i.e. along the main road, which made him unclean and unable to resume his work as a priest without the complicated ritual of purification. But he preferred to be *perol* ("ordinary man", that is, unclean), he said, than to miss the new-born twins, whom he had not yet seen. He brought some sweets for Sodup and Sodam, but the latter were already in the *puzharsh* and could therefore not be given them.

In order to obtain information concerning initial maternal care of children and the early development and education of the latter, I was obliged to question Erzigwuf and not rely only on my observations (which I would have preferred) as the time at my disposal did not allow for the longer method.

Thus, in answer to my questions, she told me that she had breast-fed her children for the following lengths of time: Pershrörsh, one year and a half; Narjilkh, three years; Pengelam, two years; Sodup and Sodam, two and a half years. She had, she assured me, fed them this way even after she was pregnant, the last set of twins until the seventh month. The fact that the babes had teethed when they were seven months old had not kept her from continuing breast feeding; they had certainly bitten her, but that was not much worse, she said, than their pulling and scratching her breasts with their hands. Sodup had been especially bad in this respect, tugging at her hair too, throwing stones and household articles at her and, after he was a year old and could walk, saying aggressive and sadistic things to her, such as his desire to disembowel her. They behaved thus when she did not suckle them quickly enough but also, she added, when suckling it seemed to add to their enjoyment. The usual way to wean Toda children is to smear the nipples with the plant called *poll*, but it had not been necessary to do this with the twins

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as they had given up of their own accord when the taste of Erzigwuf's milk changed, due to her advanced pregnancy. 862

Somewhat incredulous of Erzigwuf's assertions as they were made to me, I questioned the local medical practitioner of Ootacamund, Colonel D'Souza, Indian Medical Service (rtd.) about their veracity. He assured me that it was quite possible. He said, even, that it did not tire the mother, as after some time "it becomes mechanical". Colonel D'Souza also assured me that the contention often heard that prolonged suckling prevents conception was a fallacy completely disproved by facts, "at least in Asia". Erzigwuf also told me that Sodup and Sodam were born after she had not had any menses for eight years; two days after, however, she contradicted herself and said this was not correct (she said she had made "a mistake"). But another time she assured me that Toda women cease having any sort of periods for four months after they have given birth; that is why, she said, they cannot have children earlier – she herself had been like this. Although I do not much believe in this assertion, which is contrary to every ordinary observation anywhere, I give it here for what it is worth. 853 841 842

Small children suck their thumbs very early, Erzigwuf asserted. As a proof, she showed me one of the new-born twins, fast asleep in her lap with its thumb in its mouth. For napkins, she used bits of cloth which she regularly changed and washed. She said that she taught her children to be clean after six months. Before that, she would take them out at regular intervals and hold them in her hands, both boy and girl. Then, after, she would teach them gradually to go out by themselves, punishing them by beating them on the buttocks with a stinging nettle (called *tworkh* in Toda) when they misbehaved in the house, and rewarding them with sweets when they were good and did as they were told. They learned very quickly, in approximately one month. 854 863 861 824

Regarding genital development, Erzigwuf was very outspoken, and I had no difficulty in getting information from her, even in the presence of Narjilkh and Pengelam, who would listen with interest to the conversation through Kanvarsathi-Sunderdoss, my interpreter. She said that masturbation started very early – at about nine months. They play with their genitals, both boys and girls, but the former more so, all the time; when walking, suckling and lying down, as she put it. When they get older, this play is intensified, and after they have reached the age of one year, she intervenes to stop it. She did so, she said, and not Mutnarsh who "lets the children do anything they want". Asked why she did not allow them to carry on freely, she said, because if she did not forbid 864

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not enough at home; he threatened to tie him to the house so that he be compelled to look more after the buffaloes. With gestures and cries, still wagging a stick in his hand, he showed how he would lead the buffaloes at the next summer migration to greener pastures. When an Indian visitor turned up to have a look at the Todas, he exclaimed that he was tired of visitors, and that they should not be allowed near the *mad* (the Indian looked at me for some time, and then, intrigued, asked: "What is this work?" which may or may not have provoked Sodup's remark). He pointed to my bungalow on the opposite hill, and said he wanted to go there. Then he picked up a bit of discarded tinfoil and ran about, throwing it into the air.

A few days later I found him in the same boisterous mood. He started pulling at the clothes of Singarsh and beating his legs, and when tired of his victim, had the effrontery to do the same to Karnos, which was quite unusual. Nobody really minded, however, and there was much laughter. He then set upon Kupidz, his grandmother, pulled her hair and bit her, and even tried to undress her. He endeavoured to throw stones at the on-looking women, but stopped short at that. He picked up the empty Glaxo tin, and loudly proclaimed that it was he who had bought it for the new baby in the bazaar.

One of the most difficult things to collect from the Todas was dreams. They somehow sensed that there was something intimate about these and would not disclose them, although they were quite willing to speak openly and publicly about sexual matters. During the whole time I was in the Nilgiris in 1949, I was only able to get Motsod to give me one of his dreams, an insignificant one; and to obtain another one from Sodup. This was to the effect that he dreamed that a big bear had taken his mother away, and that it had mauled her badly, so that she was bleeding profusely from the left shoulder (Erzigwuf fed her children mainly from the left breast, because it was "more convenient", she said). He saw the bear carry his mother past the Warthuttiarsh, on the left side. He said that he was not sorry at all. (I noted that when Sodup was "naughty", Erzigwuf threatened him by saying that he would be carried off by a bear.)

One other day (August 14th, 1949). Sodup astounded me during an afternoon session by suddenly exclaiming to me in English: "Hey! you bugger!" Asked where on earth he had learned this, Kanvarsathi said it was from British soldiers on leave from Madras, but considering that we were then in 1949, that the British left India in 1947, and that Sodup was only two and a half years old, either he had a remarkably retentive memory, or Kanvarsathi's explanation was not correct. Anyhow, Sodup seemed perfectly aware that this was a rude expression, not meant to please me.

The contrast between the twins was extremely marked. Sodam hardly ever left her mother, and preferred to stay indoors. Erzigwuf told me that she had been difficult in this way ever since it had been necessary to use force to vaccinate her some time ago. When scolded she would sulk for hours, while Sodup, who had made no difficulty about being vaccinated, "forgets at once". It was obvious that exteriorized aggression was a very marked component of the little boy's character. In a film which I made